

Thrilling Adventure, Love, Intrigue and the Great War

(Continued from Preceding Page)

"Ah! And who is to make this arrangement for you? It will take the highest influences in Egypt."

"Who? Why you, sir," said Alan, cheerfully, "through the Sirdar if necessary."

"Me? Oh, I say, Mr. Jessup, 'this is a bit thick, you know.'"

"Two million pounds—that's only ten million dollars. If I choose to spend it—it's only a matter of a few years' income. Really, if you could arrange the matter, I'd be very much obliged. I've got plenty. And in a case like this it seems to me—"

"Wait a moment!"

Northby Pasha had risen, his hands to his head, and was rushing violently about the room. "Wait! I'm fuddled with this madness. You want me to get you the gold of the National Bank! To get the Sirdar to use his influence with Khalek, the Minister of Finance!"

"I could get it quite easily in New York. It will be shipped on here at once."

"And where will you put this gold? What will you do with it?"

"I propose to take it aboard the Turkana. The yacht will be my base."

"And the gold?"

"I shall sprinkle it judiciously upon the sands of Arabia!"

"Arabia?" asked Northby, shrewdly.

"In the path of the Kaba Stone, wherever that may lead!"

Northby sank into his chair, the perspiration streaming from his brow. Phrases failed him.

"My word!" he gasped, weakly.

Alan waited politely a moment or two for Northby to go on, but as he only sat and stared frowning at the image of Ptah, he ventured:

"There really shouldn't be the slightest difficulty. I'm very well known in New York. My identity can be easily established through the American consul. A wire or two will establish my credit. Of course, the sum is rather large!"

"Large!" sputtered Northby. "Mr. Jessup, if I didn't know something of your responsibility—if you hadn't already given me clear evidence of your sanity—I should say that the blow of the

sup, and I'll tell you what I'll do," he finished. "Good night."

Alan walked down the Sharia Mohammed Ali toward Sheppard's Hotel, mildly galled over the effect of his proposal upon the police officer. Whatever happened, he was at least sure that from incredulity Northby Pasha had progressed to consideration, and that there was more than a fighting chance that he would win the Englishman to his side. But Alan's resources did not end with Northby. There were other agencies in Egypt that he meant to employ if Northby failed him.

For once convinced in his own mind that his plan—conceived not an hour ago—was not impracticable, Alan surveyed the prospect with pleasure and a purpose to carry the thing through at any cost. But the strain of the last day or two had robbed him of some staying power, and

of boxes and bundles. He went down the double flight of steps to meet her and she greeted him happily.

"What on earth!"—he began.

"For Amneh," she explained. "You shall see a transformation. It's the best disguise."

"Is she still frightened?"

"A little." And then, with a laugh, "But I've told her that you would take care of her."

"Me! Oh, I say!"—

for this girl's friendship in a trying situation, quite proper even for Constance to save a Christian victim of Turkish villainy; but to turn her over to him, to pay for her hats and clothing, to take her under his wing—to adopt her, so to speak, out of hand—that was, in the language of Northby, "a bit thick." He had other affairs. If his plans worked out he wouldn't have any time to spare for vagrant ladies in distress.

Of course, it wouldn't do to have her

obliged to go out, and that he would return for luncheon, he went to the Governorat.

Northby Pasha was in his office, at his desk, just where Alan had left him, giving every evidence of a night of vigil and thought. There had been no news of von Hengel. There had been reports from the guards at the city gates and from the police boats upon the river. Every caravan road, north and east, had been watched, every foot passenger examined. There had been no sign of a man disguised in a bed-

will report to me as you think advisable. I will help you with men, with materials and advice if you need it; but I'm willing to have you move alone if you prefer."

"And the money?" asked Alan.

Northby frowned.

"There are difficulties. The Minister of Finance, the officials of the National Bank, are Mohammedans. No matter how excellent the security, they could not be expected to favor the use of this gold for this purpose. It has been necessary to invent an excuse for its temporary withdrawal until a shipment of specie arrives from London."

"I see you've been working. You have made inquiries?"

"London has been cabled—also New York. The loan will be financed by the British Government. Khalet Pasha agrees. There only remain the details."

"You haven't wasted any time. I want to thank you."

The police officer smiled. "The boot is on the other leg. You don't regret your offer?"

"No," said Alan, innocently. "Why should I? I've been trying to spend my income for years, but it's always getting ahead of me. You see," he added, triumphantly, "I'm killing two birds with one stone."

"If you only kill the right Bird—with the right Stone!" muttered Northby.

"I'm going to try. The Sirdar, then, approves?"

"He can do nothing else. I was in conference with him at the War Office until morning. Provided we get the proper guarantees"—he broke off, suddenly. "Are you personally known to the American consul?"

"Yes. Radcliffe—New Yorker."

"Who else?"

"The British Consul-General—I meant to look him up—and a chap in the Kas-el-Nil. What's his name? Er—Colonel Sandwith, of the First Leicestershires—came to see me in the hospital. Bully chap—used to be military attaché at Washington. Then there's Hoagland, my captain, of course, and all the crew!"

Colonel Northby smiled. "That ought to be sufficient. But it's going to take a few days, perhaps a week, maybe longer. There should be another cable letter!"

"And the four-inch rifles and machine guns—and a few Enfields?"

Northby laughed.

"The Sirdar will manage that with the admiral of the Port of Alexandria. Northby rose and then turned toward Alan, thoughtfully. "You know you've taken on something of a job, Mr. Jessup. If von Hengel can elude the cordon I've thrown about him, he's gifted with supernatural skill. There isn't a square mile between here and the canal that isn't going to be searched. But if he does get through you're up against a million miles of desert." He sat again. "You don't know any more than you've told me?" he asked, keenly.

"Nothing. That's what makes the problem interesting. I'll do a lot of guessing—and then there's Dawson, you know," Alan finished.

Northby stared at him suddenly and then frowned as though the last remark had suddenly branded the whole affair as a monumental piece of foolishness. As Alan still sat smiling at him quite cheerfully, Northby seemed to change his mind and smiled, too.

"Mr. Jessup," he said, thrusting out a hand, "I like you. This is either to be reckoned among the wisest moves of my administration or the most idiotic. But the thing is whimsical. And it's more than amusing, because it's practical. I've lived too long in the East not to know the value of backsheesh."

"I only hope we'll have enough, I suppose," Alan drawled, "that if I needed more gold I could come and get it?"

Northby shrugged and smiled, then walked with him to the door, ignoring the question.

"You'd better rest to-day. I will communicate with you later."

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To Be Continued Next Sunday.



"Von Hengel must have read refusal in her eyes for with a frown he raised his weapon again and aimed through the opening."

Khateeb upon you head had robbed you of your wits, but"—

"I'm quite sane, I assure you, sir, and very much in earnest!"

"By jove! Bakshish! And you'd give it away?"

"No. We have an expression in America—'money talks.' I have an idea that two millions of pounds in gold will be even more eloquent than Conrad von Hengel." Alan got up and shook out the folds of his voluminous draperies. "I don't ask you to decide to-night, Colonel Northby. Think it over. It's a good plan. I believe in it. It will lead the way to the Kaba Stone like an arrow. With a man like Daoud to help me!"

"Daoud?"

"He should be out in a week, I think. I shall want two four-inch rifles for the Turkana, some Enfields and a few machine guns."

Alan glanced at the clock and extended his hand to the bewildered police officer. "Two o'clock! I owe you an apology for the late hour. I am going on to the hotel, where you can reach me in the morning. But don't waste any time making a decision, will you? Every hour is valuable. I'm under your orders, of course, but I hope you'll see things my way. Good-night."

"One minute, Mr. Jessup."

Alan paused at the door.

"You're sure you're quite sane?"

"Positive."

"And you think my men will not catch up with the Kaba Stone this side of Suez?"

Alan shrugged, but aware of the implied compliment in the question.

"I've learned some respect for Conrad von Hengel."

"And so have I," Northby paused. "And may I add, some little for yourself."

"Thanks."

"News may reach me to-night. But come here to-morrow at twelve, Mr. Jessup."

by the time he reached the hotel he was tired out, mind and body. He could think no more.

Dawson awaited him, a rejuvenated Dawson, bathed and bleached, attired again in his conventional black.

"Glad you arrived safely, Mr. Jessup, sir. Your bath has been drawn an hour, sir."

"Thanks. Sorry you waited up. Miss Constance has been comfortably provided for, and—er—the Armenian young lady?"

"Yes, sir. Quite comfortable, sir."

"She sent no message?"

"None, sir." And then, "If you'll permit—a bit of lemon, will take the stain off nicely."

He permitted Dawson to perform his offices and afterward went to bed and was instantly asleep.

When he awoke, which was about nine o'clock, his first question was as to messages from Constance, but as none had been received he dressed and went down upon the terrace. Not finding her, he made some inquiries, discovering that Constance had gone out to make some purchases, but that the young lady who had arrived in native costume was still in her room. The question in the eyes of the maitre d'hotel Alan ignored, and went out upon the terrace for a pipe of tobacco. But he was hardly seated with an old copy of the Times when an arabiah arrived and Constance descended, her arms full

"You can't refuse this, Alan. And it seems your specialty—rescuing damsels in distress—I haven't thanked you yet. Dawson told me something of how you did it. It was very wonderful of you."

In the meanwhile they had reached the office, where a servant relieved Alan of his bundles.

"But this—er—Miss Amneh. What shall I do with her?"

"I don't know just yet. I'll see. And her name is terrific. Gooloyan, or something like that. I'm going to call her Amneh. And please be nice to her. I'm sure you will when you see her in these wonderful frocks."

"You're coming down soon? I want to talk to you."

"Do you? I thought last night you didn't care what happened to me."

"Oh, I say, Connie!"

She smiled at him, dimpling adorably, and turned back. "And, Alan!"

His look questioned.

"You won't mind paying for these things, will you? The man is here with the bill."

"H-m—er—by George!"—he stopped, as her face grew serious. "This is—er—no. Of course, not. I'll see to it at once. And you'll come down soon?"

"Perhaps," she flung over her shoulder at him and disappeared with her packages. Alan went back to his seat on the terrace, his pipe and his Times, but not to read, though the columns of the paper were bursting with details of the new Jerusalem campaign.

Amneh Gooloyan! It was all very well for Constance to show a decent gratitude

taken again, and Northby, perhaps, would see to that, but he couldn't have her tagging around Egypt after him. Something would have to be done. But the word of Connie was law, now as ever, and he knew that if she asked him to recite the Koran for her he was sure that he would try.

How wonderful she looked this morning! A little tired still, perhaps, but the same old Connie, that always gave him the same old thrill. He caught his breath and sighed. He had thought that in a different scene, with other interests and employments, he would be able to forget her. But there she was again—all spirit and charm, the only girl in the world that he had ever loved or could again. And the old pain began gnawing at his heart. But he would never let her know.

He would bury his thoughts in the hunt for the Kaba Stone. No sentiment. No tender looks. Just friendship. She would understand. And resolutely turning his thoughts away from her, Alan began thinking of the Kaba Stone and Conrad von Hengel, trying by the few items of information he possessed to lay out a plan should he succeed in getting enough money to put it into operation. Port Said first, and then Suez—von Hengel would have to cross the canal somewhere.

He waited half an hour and then glanced at his watch—11:30. And he had an appointment with Northby at 12. What on earth were Constance and the Armenian lady doing? Clothes—of course.

But he couldn't wait. So, leaving word with Dawson that he had been

wee costume, and, indeed, the traffic of the night had been much lighter than usual. Of the Sheykh Hassan Isar there had been no sign.

"In spite of our failure to find any trace of the fugitive, I have not been idle, Mr. Jessup," said Northby, quietly. "I've been thinking over your proposal, and while I believe it to be visionary I have no right to put any impediments in your way. If you choose to spend your money in the way that you suggest it's your affair. But the possibility that you may succeed—a small one at best—makes it my duty to aid you in every way, for England needs every friend she has in the world just now. Indeed, in aiding you, I aid myself, because I can see now that this movement of von Hengel's, unless halted very soon, may spread widely and cause much trouble. It has already been reported through German propaganda that Emperor William is the Grand Caliph of the European Mohammedans, and that he went to war to free them from Christian oppression. With the Kaba Stone and documents proving its authenticity in the possession of an agent of the General Staff, there is no telling where the movement will end. I do not attempt to conceal my alarm. The danger is very real. And every man that can be trusted should be put on England's side."

Northby spoke with great deliberation and seriousness, and Alan noted with pleasure the change in his demeanor.

"You've shown skill, Mr. Jessup—and I believe in you."

"Thanks."

"You're what the world knows as a lucky man. I believe in luck. No man in the Intelligence Department can afford not to believe in it. And I've decided to back you to my limit—to help you all I can."

He took up a paper from the desk. "Here is a commission from the Sirdar, granted under the stress of unusual conditions, as a lieutenant in the Intelligence Department of the British Army."

"By George!" Alan took the paper and scanned it. "That's awfully good of you."

"That commission is issued for this particular service and is revoked or terminated at its conclusion. I don't propose to hamper you with instructions. You